

## I GIVE THANKS TO MY GOD FOR YOU

### I. 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

A. Before this time next Sunday, our little Church Family will turn 32 years old. Had everybody stayed (or lived) these past three decades, we'd number in the many hundreds! ;-) But we are who we are, by the grace of God, and what we will be is not yet fully known. We've much to be thankful for and much to look forward to!

B. Since Friday's our Anniversary, I wanted today's text to convey something close to my own heart with respect to this Church Family. Perhaps with the exception of his scathing letter to the Galatians, this is Paul's most confrontational. While Athens was an academic city, Corinth was a party town. It was steeped in pagan worship and immorality. There were 12 temples to false gods and goddesses. Prostitution was actually a part of their pagan worship. It was also a key city for trade by land and sea. In this cultural morass of lust, greed, & idolatry, a church was growing.

C. But this church had lots of problems. Orange Barrels everywhere! Despite having earnest and gifted believers, there was division, immorality, uppityness, social prejudices, and chaotic discord in their gatherings--including drunkenness during communion. *(That's why we use small cups and grape juice!)* But with all their issues, Paul's heart in these verses represent the kind of love God has overall for His Church. This same love saturates each stern warning and disciplinary action soon to follow.

D. 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 (ESV) is for all of us today...

**1a) V1-3:** *1 Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (An immensely gracious greeting: undeserved mercy & love and shalom-wellness & wholeness be yours!)*

**1b) Consider the phrase. "Sanctified in Christ; called to be saints."** (Gk: Hagios, "holy;" Hagiazo, "make holy") *Sanctified* means, set apart from evil and set apart to God; i.e. set apart for holiness. In one sense we've already been sanctified as we've been imputed with the righteousness of Christ and deemed holy. This is often called, *Positional sanctification*. But we also know that we're *being* sanctified; we are in the redemptive process of being made into the likeness of Christ, i.e. "*called to be saints*" or called to be sanctified (set apart) followers. This we call, *Progressive sanctification*. In Paul's greeting he acknowledges both the positional and progressive--the *already* and the *not-yet* realities of our sanctification. *(His beautiful words also reflect mine to you...)*

**2) V4:** *4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, (Sorta like: 'I thank God His mercy & love have latched onto you and He's made you His own!')*

3) **V5: 5** that in every way you were enriched in Him in all speech and all knowledge-- (endowed with riches that have impacted how you think and how you speak-- what you know and what you say.)

4) **V6-8: 6** even as the testimony about Christ (The Gospel; the atoning death and victorious resurrection of Christ that purchased your redemption & adoption; that conferred upon you everlasting life.) was confirmed among you-- **7** so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, **8** who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (cf Rom. 8:1) **9** God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**E. Philippians 1:6** (AMP) echoes the same **V9** promise: **6** I am convinced and confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will [continue to] perfect and complete it until the day of Christ Jesus [the time of His return].

**F. Even David knew this to be true. Psalm 138:8** (ESV) says: **8** The LORD will fulfill His purpose for me; Your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of Your hands. (God will not forsake the work of His hands and that means you!)

**G. So what are the ramifications of being sanctified *already* as well as *not-yet*? They are likened to having been adopted but not yet possessing your full inheritance. Because you're an heir, you're well cared for now. But as an heir you're also disciplined now. You have privileges inside the Family that those outside the Family don't have. Likewise, you face consequences inside the Family that outsiders do not. Because of your future, you all are the ones in the enviable position! For those in God's Family, life now is as rough as it will ever get! Outside the Family, this is as good as it'll ever get!**

**H. David and Solomon remind us why we needn't envy outsiders. Psalm 37:1-2** (ESV) says: **1** Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! **2** For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. **Proverbs 24:19-20** (ESV) says: **19** Fret not yourself because of evildoers, and be not envious of the wicked, **20** for the evil man has no future; the lamp of the wicked will be put out. (Psalm 73 also exhorts us against envying outsiders. Please go home and read it...)

**I. Sometimes you may look at those outside the Family of Faith and think they have it so much better. They seem to have it all. Their grass seems greener. Their toys are better. They seem to get away with everything while you get away with nothing. Don't be deceived by such appearances! There are no heirs outside the Family. There may be future heirs outside the Family who'll become fellow heirs but the inheritance of eternal life in Christ belongs to Family Members only. You are blessed beyond the pale!**

**J. Let's recall our earthly parents who made us toe the line--why'd they do that? Remember when:** While camping in a field near here, three friends were lighting firecrackers at the school. As a bunch of us watched from a distance, the cops came. The rest of us fled. Later the three friends who we figured were caught, returned to our campsite. They informed us: "We turned all your names over to the cops and they're notifying our parents." We were innocent! Angry at our friends! Terrified! But not for what the cops might do, but what our parents would do! Later that night our friends confessed they'd made it all up. They hadn't been caught. I feel the relief to this day! But thank God for parents who loved us enough to make us toe the line.

Thanks be to God who loves us even more than our parents ever could! And thanks be to God who loves this little Church Family and who has blessed us over the years!

**K. So is there a suitable Benediction I can send you home with? A Biblical decree from God's heart to yours; a word of encouragement fitting for this season; a pronouncement of blessing to propel you forward in your respective walks with Christ? How about **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** (AMP) **23** *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through [that is, separate you from profane and vulgar things, make you pure and whole and undamaged--consecrated to Him--set apart for His purpose]; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete and [be found] blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** Faithful and absolutely trustworthy is He who is calling you [to Himself for your salvation], and He will do it [He will fulfill His call by making you holy, guarding you, watching over you, and protecting you as His own].***

\* Close with Prayer...

## **Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff**

### **1 Corinthians 1:1-9 (ESV)**

**1** Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, **2** To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: **3** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **4** I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, **5** that in every way you were enriched in Him in all speech and all knowledge— **6** even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— **7** so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, **8** who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Philippians 1:6 (AMP)**

**6** I am convinced and confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will [continue to] perfect and complete it until the day of Christ Jesus [the time of His return].

### **Psalms 138:8 (ESV)**

**8** The LORD will fulfill His purpose for me; Your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of Your hands.

### **Psalms 37:1-2 (ESV)**

**1** Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! **2** For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.

### **Proverbs 24:19-20 (ESV)**

**19** Fret not yourself because of evildoers, and be not envious of the wicked, **20** for the evil man has no future; the lamp of the wicked will be put out.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (AMP)**

**23** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through [that is, separate you from profane and vulgar things, make you pure and whole and undamaged—consecrated to Him—set apart for His purpose]; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete and [be found] blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** Faithful and absolutely trustworthy is He who is calling you [to Himself for your salvation], and He will do it [He will fulfill His call by making you holy, guarding you, watching over you, and protecting you as His own].

### **Psalm 73:1-28 (NLT)**

#### ***A Psalm of Asaph***

**1** Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure. **2** But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone. **3** For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness. **4** They seem to live such painless lives; their bodies are so healthy and strong. **5** They don't have troubles like other people; they're not plagued with problems like everyone else. **6** They wear pride like a jeweled necklace and clothe themselves with cruelty. **7** These fat cats have everything their hearts could ever wish for! **8** They scoff and speak only evil; in their pride they seek to crush others. **9** They boast against the very heavens, and their words strut throughout the earth. **10** And so the people are dismayed and confused, drinking in all their words. **11** "What does God know?" they ask. "Does the Most High even know what's happening?" **12** Look at these wicked people—enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply. **13** Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason? **14** I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain. **15** If I had really spoken this way to others, I would have been a traitor to Your people. **16** So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is! **17** Then I went into Your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked. **18** Truly, You put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction. **19** In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors. **20** When You arise, O Lord, You will laugh at their silly ideas as a person laughs at dreams in the morning. **21** Then I realized that my heart was bitter, and I was all torn up inside. **22** I was so foolish and ignorant—I must have seemed like a senseless animal to You. **23** Yet I still belong to You; You hold my right hand. **24** You guide me with Your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny. **25** Whom have I in heaven but You? I desire You more than anything on earth. **26** My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; He is mine forever. **27** Those who desert Him will perish, for You destroy those who abandon You. **28** But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things You do.

### **Bonus Stuff**

**The Indescribable Joy of Loving the Church God Called You to Serve - Karl Vaters**  
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/2019/june/loving-church-god-called-you-to-serve.html>

**Do Not Envy the Wicked - Tim Challies**  
<https://www.challies.com/articles/do-not-envy-the-wicked/>

**Why Do We Envy the Wicked? - Tony Reinke**  
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-do-we-envy-the-wicked>

**This is Not Your Grandparents' Church - Tim Challies**  
<https://www.challies.com/articles/this-is-not-your-grandparents-church/>

### **Psalm 57:1-3 (AMP)**

**1** Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious and merciful to me, for my soul finds shelter and safety in You, and in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge and be confidently secure until destruction passes by. **2** I will cry to God Most High, who accomplishes all things on my behalf [for He completes my purpose in His plan]. **3** He will send from heaven and save me; He calls to account him who tramples me down. *Selah.* God will send out His lovingkindness and His truth.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (ESV)**

**1** Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. **2** For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **3** While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. **4** But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. **5** For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. **6** So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. **7** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. **8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

### **2 Peter 3:8-13 (ESV)**

**8** But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. **11** Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, **12** waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies

will melt as they burn! **13** But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

### **Prose by John Wesley**

"Purge me from every sinful blot;  
My idols all be cast aside:  
Cleanse me from every evil thought,  
From all the filth of self and pride.  
The hatred of the carnal mind  
Out of my flesh at once remove:  
Give me a tender heart, resigned,  
And pure, and full of faith and love."

- John Wesley, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, Volume XI, Third Edition, p. 386.

### **Quote by John Newton**

"I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

### **Quote by John Owen**

"The growth of trees and plants takes place so slowly that it is not easily seen. Daily we notice little change. But, in the course of time, we see that a great change has taken place. So it is with grace. Sanctification is a progressive, lifelong work (Prov. 4:18). It is an amazing work of God's grace and it is a work to be prayed for (Rom. 8:27).

- John Owen, *The Holy Spirit: Works of John Owen*, p.p. 108-109.

### **Quote by S. Lewis Johnson**

"Justification, someone has said, is restoration to life. Sanctification is restoration to health. When a person has Jesus Christ he has not only justification but he also has sanctification. He has justification as his position. He is righteous and satisfies the righteous claims of a holy God in Christ. But also he possesses ideally sanctification. But that sanctification is something that is worked out in a process in his daily life. Justification brings us from the tomb, to use another figure. Sanctification delivers us from the old clothes that characterize the life of the tomb. We think of John chapter 11 and Lazarus' resurrection, and when Lazarus came forth from the tomb at the word of Christ, it reminds us of the fact that we have life and justification through the word of the Lord Jesus Christ. But then it was commanded that others should loose Lazarus from his garments. And so it is necessary for a believer in Jesus Christ to put off the old threads and put on new, set forth in the word of God as that characteristic of the new life in Christ."

- Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., sermon titled, "*Shall We Continue to Sin?*" <http://sljinstitute.net/pauls-epistles/romans/shall-we-continue-in-sin/>

### **Quote by Howard G. Hendricks**

"Many of us want a word from God, but we don't want the Word of God. We know enough to own a Bible but not enough for the Bible to own us. We pay the Bible lip

service, but we fail to give it *"life service."* In a world where the only absolute is that there are no absolutes, there is little room left for the authoritative Word of God as revealed in the Bible."

**Quote by Tim Keller**

"God's Kingdom is "present in its beginnings, but still future in its fullness. This guards us from an under-realized eschatology (expecting no change now) and an over-realized eschatology (expecting all change now). In this stage, we embrace the reality that while we're not yet what we will be, we're also no longer what we used to be."

**Quote by D.L. Moody**

"Small numbers make no difference to God. There is nothing small if God is in it."